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Indian Visit

WITHIN OUR BORDERS

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They Save Lives

Electrical Hazards Detected By Inspectors

Interior Wiring, Power Facilities And Electrical Equipment Are Under Constant Scrutiny By Eighteen Government Inspectors Stationed Throughout The Province

Many people in Alberta owe their lives to the electrical inspectors.

Overloading of lines, improper fusing, inadequate wiring, loose connections and many other hazards exist in homes, factories and businesses in all parts of Alberta, bringing a threat of accident or death to those who are unaware of the dangers. To draw these hazards to the attention of the public and to carry out extensive inspections of installations, the Electrical Branch of the Department of Industries and Labor was organized in April, 1951.

Previously, this unit had existed as part of the Mechanical Branch, Department of Public Works, but the increasing importance of electricity to Alberta industry prompted the setting up of a separate branch.

There are three main responsibilities undertaken by the 18 electrical inspectors in the Province. The most important of these is the inspection of interior wiring, which takes up more than half the time of the branch. The other two duties are the inspection of the generation, transmission and distribution of electrical power, and the approval of all electrical equipment used in Alberta.

Interior Wiring

The inspection of interior wiring usually is confined to new businesses or dwellings under construction, both in rural and urban areas. The cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and Red Deer employ their own inspectors, who handle these duties within their own areas.

In the case of industrial construction, the inspectors usually visit the site several times during the installation of electrical wiring and give final approval upon completion. Interim inspections also are made of dwellings wherever possible, although many buildings in outlying areas receive only final inspection.

If the wiring in any factory or dwelling is found to be in a hazardous condition, the electrical inspectors have the authority to have the power cut off until it is corrected.

Although most of their inspections of interior wiring are made on new dwellings, the inspectors often visit a home or check the farm buildings where it has been reported that electrical hazards exist.

The inspectors stress that the public always is eager to correct any electrical faults that may endanger their lives, homes or stock, but usually are unaware of these faults.

One of the common hazards found in dwellings is the inadequacy of wiring. Houses constructed 25 years ago were wired only for light, and the introduction of numerous electrical appliances has dangerously overloaded these antiquated wirings. In addition to being dangerous, overloading prevents the electrical equipment from operating efficiently.

In the large plants, where considerable electrical equipment is utilized, semi-annual inspections are made to see that the installation is maintained and operated safely. The most dangerous practise in factories is the overloading of circuits. Extensions to new machines are often made from existing circuits and the conductors cannot safely carry the extra load.

Investigation of Accidents

Whenever serious or fatal accidents caused by electricity occur, the Electrical Branch makes an immediate investigation to determine the cause. Copies of their reports are made available to the Workmen's Compensation Board. Last year alone there were seven fatalities and 24 serious accidents caused by electricity. Some 200 fires were also recorded as having been caused by defective wiring and equipment.

In one instance, the investigation of the charred interior of a gutted building disclosed the remains of the fuse box with a penny plugged into the socket. Dangerous practices such as this are often the cause of electrical fires.

110 Volts Can Kill

S. A. B. Kembry, Chief Electrical Inspector, stresses the fact that ordinary house power of 110 volts can easily kill an average human if improper wiring or fixtures exist. He reviewed four fatal accidents in Alberta in a period of 18 months where normal house current was the direct cause of death.

The inspection of the generation, transmission and distribution of electrical power covers plants which distribute both provincially and municipally. When a power company plans to erect a new power line, plans and maps are sent to the Electrical Branch for approval. The construction is checked by inspectors to see that there is proper clearance of lines from the ground and from other circuits; that there is adequate climbing space for workmen; and that strength of conductors and size of poles and supports is adequate.

Regular inspections also are made at power plants throughout the Province, to ensure there are no existing hazards which might endanger the lives of workmen.

How Equipment Is Approved

The approval of all electrical equipment, materials and appliances used in Alberta would be a major undertaking were it not for the Canadian Standards Association. This Canada-wide group has special laboratories to inspect electrical equipment, and their rulings are accepted by the Electrical Branch. This group inspects and approves practically all electrical equipment used and sold in Alberta, and rarely must the branch carry out its own inspections.

There was one case recently where 500 electric irons were imported from Japan. Because they did not carry C.S.A. approval, the importing company sent samples to the Electrical Branch for its approval.

To carry out the test, the irons were plugged in. Within 15 minutes most of the plug had burned away, the nickel plating had turned black and smoke began to pour from the warped cover of the appliance. The 500 irons were not approved.

Unapproved Articles Removed From Sale

The electrical inspectors have discovered that whenever they find a retail store selling appliances which have not been approved by the C.S.A. or by their own branch, the merchants co-operate by quickly removing the articles from their counters. It is usually through an oversight that the equipment is placed on sale, and retailers realize their dangerous legal position if the goods prove defective and cause any property damage. ●

Text Of Speech From Throne

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

I welcome you to this Fifth Session of the Eleventh Legislature of the Province of Alberta.

We meet today in the shadow of a great bereavement. The sudden passing of His Majesty King George the Sixth has filled the hearts of all his subjects with sorrow and a deep sense of personal loss. His Majesty's greatness was such that the announcement of his death profoundly affected the thoughts and emotions of millions throughout the world and that fact in itself is perhaps the highest tribute that can be paid to a monarch who, in both his public and private life at all times, set the finest of examples for his people to follow. An appropriate motion will be placed before you expressing the sympathy of all our people to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, and to all the members of the Royal Family. May God comfort and sustain them in their hour of bereavement.

We have acclaimed the accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second and in so doing we have recalled with much pleasure her recent visit in our midst.

Our people will remember the joyous occasion of Her Majesty's visit to our Province with her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh.

We pledge to her our unfeigned devotion and loyalty and we pray that she will be blessed with long life and Divine wisdom that under her reign the Empire may flourish and her people prosper.

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Unfavorable weather and harvesting conditions last year adversely affected our basic industry, agriculture, and seriously reduced the quality of and income from field crops. Only the stabilizing effect of the extensive industrial and natural resources development currently taking place prevented the serious crop losses from impairing the provincial economy to an even greater extent. Many farmers suffered great personal losses which it is hoped will be partially recovered by further harvesting after the snow melts in spring.

Pursuing its aggressive policy of agricultural assistance, my Government will ask you to approve a further extension in District Agriculturist services. The agricultural stabilization program proposed for the coming year will place emphasis on soil conservation, livestock improvement and better land use. To improve the quality and production of field crops, you will be asked to provide assistance for the construction of additional seed cleaning plants at a number of new locations.

Irrigation waters, stored in the new St. Mary's Dam, are now available for distribution and an accelerated program, involving the construction of lateral ditches, land surveying and levelling, will be carried out during the coming year.

Substantial progress has been made during the past year in the extension of hydro-electric facilities, particularly in the field of rural electrification. Further encouragement will be given this program by continuing assistance to Rural Electrification Co-operatives under the provisions of The Co-operatives Association Guarantee Act and by extending the services provided by the Alberta Power Commission which will be reconstituted and placed under the direction of a full-time chairman.

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My Government proposes to extend its program for the progressive and orderly development of our natural resources. The development of oil and natural gas, which has contributed much to our provincial prosperity, has reached the point where it is favorably affecting the economy of the whole of Canada. My Government will continue to promote this development under policies which assure sound conservation practices and encourage competitive individual enterprise with all our people sharing in the benefits to the end that Alberta's production of petroleum products will be sufficient to meet the total Canadian requirements at the earliest possible date.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Conservation Board has completed a further thorough study of the reserves of natural gas and the availability of surplus gas for export beyond our borders. The board is making every effore to complete its report before the end of this session of the Legislature. In dealing with this matter, my Government's first concern is to make certain that the rights and best interests of the people of Alberta are fully protected. Further progress toward the development of the vast bituminous sand deposits along the Athabasca River is anticipated during the coming year.

In the field of forestry, my Government will continue its aerial surveys and forest inventory and will work in close harmony with the industry in carrying out a sound forest conservation program. You will be asked to approve amendments to The Forests Act necessary to this end.

An agreement has been entered into with the Government of Canada whereby the provision of the Old Age Assistance Act (Canada) and the Blind Persons Act (Canada) were made available to the people of Alberta effective January 1 of this year. Complementary legislation to these statutes will be placed before you and will replace The Old Age Pensions Act which you approved at the last session and which granted authority to my Government to enter into these agreements.

A revised Supplementary Allowance Act will be introduced to enable the payment of these special allowances to all pensioners in the 65 to 69 year age group and to certain categories of persons who receive pensions under The Old Age Security Act (Canada). Hospitalization, medical, dental and optical treatment services will be provided at the expense of the Province to all persons and their dependents who are granted assistance under The Old Age Assistance Act.

Further legislation will be submitted to provide a widow's pension of $40 per month together with hospital and medical services to widows in the 60 to 65 year age group who qualify under the same regulations other than age as apply to The Old Age Assistance Act.

It is proposed to raise the age limit from 21 years to 25 years for those who suffer from the effects of rheumatoid arthritis and for whom the Province will provide free hospitalization and treatment services.

You will be asked to approve substantially increased appropriations to assist municipal and hospital authorities in providing subsidized hospitalization to the largest possible number of individuals.

The reorganization of rural health units will be continued during the coming year. It is planned to make this service available to all municipalities in the Province as rapidly as the necessary Public Health staff can be recruited.

To serve the needs of southern Alberta, the facilities of a cerebral palsy clinic will be provided in Calgary similar to that now in operation in Edmonton.

The Aberhart Memorial Sanatorium now completed will make available, during the coming year, much needed additional facilities for the treatment of those suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis.

There will be submitted for your consideration at this session a bill providing for a new School Act. The purpose of this bill will be to consolidate and clarify existing legislation which has been subject to numerous amendments over many years.

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The School Borrowing Assistance Act also will come before you for modification. My Government proposes to increase the benefits provided under this legislation and to simplify its administration.

You will be asked to approve appropriations for what is expected to be the largest main highway construction program in the history of the Province, together with substantial grants on a 75 percent - 25 percent basis to enable Municipalities, Local Improvement Districts and Special Areas, to supplement the highway network with improved district highways and local roads.

You will be asked to provide funds for the construction of necessary new public buildings at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, and to accommodate increased apprenticeships training at the Technical Institute of Calgary. Extensions are required to the present facilities at the Ponoka and Oliver Mental Institutes and at Keith Sanatorium in Calgary. The program also will include additional construction at the Provincial Jails and the Bowden Institution, together with agricultural buildings at Olds and Brooks and a new Provincial Building at Peace River.

Further provision will be requested this year, under the terms of The Self Liquidating Projects Act, which already has proved of great benefit to many municipalities. You also will be asked to approve amendments to The Municipal Assistance Act designed to extend greater assistance to municipalities and particularly to aid those municipalities which are in more difficult financial circumstances.

There will be presented for your consideration a bill to enact a new Town and Village Act which will correspond in purpose to The City Act which received your approval at the last session.

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At the beginning of the year, the administration over juvenile delinquency was transferred from the Department of Public Welfare to the Attorney-General's Department. You will be asked to consider legislation designed to deal more efficiently with this increasing

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Text Of Speech From Throne

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problem. Legislation providing for the establishment of family courts also will be submitted for your approval.

To provide for more economical and effective enforcement of provincial laws, a central inspection force, made up largely of inspectors transferred from various government departments is being organized under the Attorney-General's Department to work in close collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

A program of motor vehicle inspection, approved at the last session, was put into effect during the past year in an effort to reduce the heavy toll of lives in motor vehicle accidents on our highways. As a further step to greater highway safety, you will be asked to appropriate the necessary funds at this session to provide for a program of driver testing in the case of new applicants for drivers' licenses and in cases where drivers have been involved in highway accidents.

Alberta's growing tourist industry, which last year reached all-time proportions, will be further stimulated by an aggressive promotional campaign during the coming year. Other promotional activities for which you will be asked to make provision will include cultural development and the encouragement of handicrafts.

The unsettled state of world affairs still makes imperative an adequate program for civilian defence. In this respect, you will be asked to provide funds for the standardization of all fire fighting equipment to assure the greatest possible measure of mutual aid in the event of civil disaster.

Provision will be made for the further extension of Treasury Branch services. Problems in obtaining senior staff have retarded expansion plans but every effort is being made to overcome this difficulty and establish a system of Treasury Branches adequate to assure the people of the Province an effective measure of control over their own credit resources.

A large scale expansion of Alberta Government Telephone facilities will be reflected in the statutory provision of capital funds you will be asked to approve for this important public service.

During this session, two special committees, appointed by this legislature to recommend amendments to The Workmen's Compensation Act and to study the rules of procedure in this Assembly will submit their respective reports for your attention.

The Public Accounts for the past fiscal year, together with the estimates for the coming year will be submitted for your most careful consideration.

I leave you now to the discharge of your Legislative duties with the full confidence that your deliberations under Divine guidance will be in the best interests of each and all of our citizens. ●

Centralized Buying System Of Purchasing Agency Enables Large Savings Of Public Funds

A system of centralized purchasing for all provincial government departments saves Alberta taxpayers many thousands of dollars annually.

Any order valued at more than $10, which is required by a government department, is bought by the Alberta Government Purchasing Agency on the competitive market. A thorough knowledge of sources of supply and discounts gained by purchasing goods in wholesale lots have made the agency a key point in the government's operations.

When a government department needs equipment or supplies, a requisition is sent to the Purchasing Agency, after it has been approved by the department's advisory member, signed by the branch head and approved by the minister.

The requisition then is scrutinized by the Director or Supervisor of Purchases and given to one of four buyers under whose classification it falls. Each buyer is thoroughly familiar with the sources of supply in his own field and is in a position to be well informed on qualities and values of required equipment or supplies.

Whenever the required goods are sold on a competitive market, tenders are called by the agency. Any vendor is allowed to tender a price on government business, and every firm is given equal opportunity. There is no such thing as a preferred list.

The lowest bid will not necessarily get the contract, as the Purchasing Agency takes into consideration the quality, conformity to specification, time of delivery, ability of the tenderer to conform with the terms, and the origin of the product.

It has been the policy of the Purchasing Agency, whenever possible, to buy Alberta-made goods first, Canadian-made second, and British Commonwealth-made third, providing they meet the required standards.

For example, if two bids of the same price are received for an order, an Alberta-made product will receive preference, providing it is of suitable quality.

Often the facilities of the Research Council of Alberta and the Provincial Analyst are used to establish the actual quality or content of any sample under review.

Once quality has been established, purchases are confined to articles at least equal to the proven goods. This move often prompts manufacturers to improve the quality of their goods, so that they may compete against accepted articles of superior quality. This tends to increase the quality of goods used by the government over a period of years.

The Purchasing Agency came into being in 1939 under the Alberta Government Purchasing Agency Act. Previously, all purchases were made by the separate departments, while office equipment was bought by the Department of Public Works.

The Purchasing Agency immediately saved the taxpayers thousands of dollars annually, because it began to buy articles in bulk, thus receiving a greater discount.

For example, before the Purchasing Agency was in operation, a government department needing 20 light bulbs would have purchased them at the regular rate of 15 cents each. But under the present system, the order for the bulbs is sent to the Purchasing Agency.

When the order is received, five other departments might simultaneously require 20 light bulbs, making a total of 100 bulbs. But the Purchasing Agency may decide that the bulbs will only last four months, and purchases a year's supply, or 300 light bulbs.

For a purchase of that quantity, the discount may bring the price down to about nine cents a bulb. Thus the agency would save $18 on a $45 order.

This method of centralized purchasing has been used in many American states for several years, and has proven a valuable asset in purchasing goods wholesale with few criticisms or complaints.

The total purchases made for the Alberta government for the first 10 months of 1951 totals some $32,295,280, or about $3,983,000 more than for the full year of 1950. Every year as government services become more specialized, and as prices show a steady increase, more and more strain is placed on the Purchasing Agency. When the service first came into effect in 1939, less than one-tenth of the 1951 figure was spent for the year.

The Advisory Purchasing Committee, which is an integral part of the Purchasing Agency, determines the necessity for purchasing any supplies, and the amount required. The committee is made up of one representative from each government department.

If the advisory committee does not agree to a purchase, the Director of Purchases advises the Provincial Treasurer, under whose authority the Purchasing Agency lies. The Provincial Treasurer, in turn, takes the matter up with the Executive Council, for approval or further direction.

This system of buying vast amounts of stationery, office equipment, machinery and other goods has become an efficient operation which is offered fairly and competitively to businesses in Alberta and throughout Canada. ●

Indians Make Three Day Visit To Capitol

About 35 Indian chiefs and councillors from reserves throughout Alberta attended a session of the Alberta Legislature last week during their three-day tour of government departments.

The Indians were from seven major tribes in the Province—Blackfeet, Blood, Peigan, Cree, Stony, Sarcee and Chipewyan. Most of them were executives of the Indian Association of Alberta which represents most of the 10,000 natives in the Province.

Although their reserves are under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada, there are many Provincial services and regulations which affect their daily lives. To explain these, talks were arranged on soils and weed control, livestock, home nursing, fish and game, nutrition, tuberculosis, Indian life and arts, and laws affecting the Indian. In addition, movies were shown on cultural activities, agriculture and health services.

The tour was arranged by the Friends of the Indians Society in co-operation with several government departments. ●

A cannon from Fort Edmonton which helped drive off the attacks of their ancestors interested a group of 35 Indian chiefs and councillors who last week spent three days visiting the provincial government buildings. Left to right, above, are: Chief Goodrider, Peigan Indian from Brocket; Chief Ben Calfrobe, Blackfeet Indian from Gleichen; Chief Pat Bad Eagle, Peigan Indian from Brocket, and Chief Tom Kaquitts, Stony Indian from Morley.

Medicine And Law Join In Duties Of Coroner

Investigations and inquests into violent and sudden deaths in Alberta are performed by 144 skilled coroners who have been trained in the medical and legal aspects of their work.

On their shoulders lie the heavy responsibilities of protecting the public from negligence and malpractice and of directing attention to industrial and other hazards. In 1950 alone, more than 900 investigations were performed by Alberta coroners and inquests resulted from 180 of these investigations. More than one-third of the inquests was directed by the Chief Provincial Coroner, Dr. M. M. Cantor.

Each coroner is limited in jurisdiction to an area with a radius of about 20 miles. However, in areas of larger populations more than one coroner is appointed. In nearly all cases, coroners are practicing physicians with special training in coroner's duties. Dr. Cantor is provided with special powers and duties by order-in-council to have jurisdiction over the entire Province. All coroners are responsible to the Attorney-General and him.

The coroners investigate when death results from violence, misadventure or causes other than disease or sickness. An investigation is also indicated when there are reports of negligence, misconduct or malpractice, death under unusual circumstances or in any instance where the cause of death is not clear.

When a coroner is notified of such a death, he is empowered by the Coroner's Act to take possession of the body, view it and make any inquiries necessary to decide whether an inquest should be called. He may call on police to assist him, and, with the approval of the Attorney-General, employ experts to assist in the inquiry. If the inquiry indicates death from natural causes or from an accident involving no other person, the coroner may decide that an inquest is unnecessary.

He then allows the body to be buried and submits an affidavit to the Attorney-General, reporting the investigation and his reasons for deciding not to hold an inquest. The decision of the coroner is not always final; the Attorney-General may direct the investigating coroner or another coroner to proceed with an inquest.

If investigation indicates that death resulted from violence or negligence, an inquest is ordered. Sometimes no other person may be implicated in the death but an inquest is held to bring to the public attention ways to reduce industrial hazards, eliminate dangerous practices and generally improve public safety. Inquests are held always whenever a prisoner dies in a jail or mental institute.

A coroner's jury is selected from the public at large and usually represents a cross-examination of the community. After the jury is sworn in, witnesses are called to provide whatever information they can on the cause of death and the circumstances related to the death. Witnesses are questioned by the coroner and the jury while under oath. After all witnesses have been heard, the jury adjourns to bring in a verdict. If an "open verdict" is brought in, the jury has decided that no blame can be attached to any individual as a result of the death.

The verdict and any recommendations of the coroner are submitted to the Attorney-General. Other recommendations as the nature of action which should be taken in the case may be submitted by Crown prosecutors or police. The verdict of the jury states when, where, how and by what means a person died and it may also direct responsibility of the death on some person or agent. In this way, the jury's verdict often has a direct bearing on what legal actions may follow.

Although coroners receive a fee for their services at investigations and inquests (jurymen also are paid a standard fee), most coroners are public-spirited citizens interested in the service they are asked to perform. The payment for coroner's duties does not compensate for the time lost from private medical practice.

The number of investigations and inquests into sudden deaths has increased during recent years. Increased use of motor vehicles and expanding industrialization have led to more traffic and industrial accidents, placing a heavier burden on the Province's coroners. ●

Booklet Describes Health Services

A booklet dealing with the numerous health services provided by the Government of Alberta has been released by the Department of Public Health.

Entitled "Your Health Services," the colorful 30-page publication may be obtained from the Division of Health Education, Department of Public Health, or from the Publicity Branch, Legislative Buildings. ●

"Within Our Borders" is a publication designed to acquaint the people of the Province with the administration and services of the Alberta Government.

It is believed the many and varied services of the Government will be effective in the degree they are known and used.

Any material used is for immediate republication. All photographs used are Alberta Government Photographs unless otherwise specified.

Correspondence should be addressed to "Within Our Borders," Legislative Buildings, Edmonton.

More Modern Equipment Helps Reduce Fire Loss

Fire losses for 1951 in Alberta are expected to be 25 percent less than 1950's losses, according to Provincial Fire Commissioner A. E. Bridges.

During 1951 fire losses totalled approximately $4,000,000. Killed in fires were 28 persons—nine less than the total who died in fires in 1950.

However, more fires of incendiary origin are suspected to have occurred in 1951. ●

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